

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 0418

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR EC
SUBJ: DISCUSSION OF NARCOTICS CORRUPTION WITH HIGH
ECUADOREAN OFFICIALS

1. I RECENTLY HAD OCCASION TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM OF POLICE
AND JUDICIAL CORRUPTION IN THE NARCOTICS FIELD WITH THE
MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT AND GENERAL DURAN, THE ARMY MEMBER
OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT.

2. ON JANUARY 11, DURING MY FAREWELL CALL ON MINISTER OF
GOVERNMENT, COL. BOLIVAR JARRIN, I TOLD HIM THAT ONE OF THE
FEW PROBLEMS THAT I FELT WE AND THE GOE HAD NOT MADE SUFFICIENT
PROGRESS ON DURING MY STAY HERE WAS THAT OF CORRUPTION AMONG
LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES BY NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS. I REMINDED
HIM OF MY MEETING WITH HIM OF ALMOST A YEAR AGO IN WHICH I
FIRST RAISED THIS SUBJECT AND OF THE LIAISON HE HAD ESTABLISHED
BETWEEN THE EMBASSY AND HIS UNDER SECRETARY TO WORK ON THE
PROBLEM. I POINTED OUT THAT, UNFORTUNATELY, THIS MECHANISM
HAD NOT PRODUCED THE DESIRED RESULTS AND THAT THEREFORE I
HAD TAKEN A NUMBER OF OTHER MEASURES, CULMINATING IN MY
DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEM WITH GENERAL DURAN IN DECEMBER,
AT WHICH TIME I HAD PRESENTED THE GENERAL WITH DOCUMENTATION
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REGARDING THE PRIMA FACIE EVIDENCE OF CORRUPTION IN NARCOTICS
ENFORCEMENT. I TOLD HIM THAT I WAS AFRAID THAT THE LACK
OF PROGRESS IN THIS MATTER COULD LEAD TO A DETERIORATION
OF THE OTHERWISE EXCELLENT RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES,
NOTING THE VERY HIGH PRIORITY THAT THE USG WAS GIVING TO
MAKING INROADS ON THE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC. I MENTIONED THE
RECENT REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON NARCOTICS AND ITS

UNFAVORABLE COMMENTS REGARDING ECUADOR. COL. JARRIN PROMISED ME THAT HE WOULD CONSULT WITH HIS UNDER SECRETARY TO SEE WHAT MEASURES COULD BE TAKEN TO ROOT OUT CORRUPTION IN THE POLICE FORCE.

3. ON THE OCCASION OF MY FAREWELL CALL ON GENERAL DURAN ON JANUARY 16, HE HIMSELF RAISED THE SUBJECT, REFERRING TO MY DEMARCHE TO HIM LAST MONTH. HE SAID THAT HE HAD STUDIED THE MATERIAL I HAD PRESENTED TO HIM WITH CARE AND WAS IN THE PROCESS OF TAKING ACTION. HE TOLD ME THAT THE RECENT WHOLESale TURNOver IN THE SUPREME COURT WAS PARTLY MOTIVATED BY HIS DESIRE TO CLEAN OUT THE LOWER COURTS OF CORRUPT JUDGES. HE SAID THAT THE SUPREME COURT WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS WOULD BE REMOVING AND APPOINTING JUDGES THROUGHOUT THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM. HE ALSO SAID THAT "HIS SERVICE" (I.E. THE ARMY) WAS GOING TO BE TAKING MEASURES TO ATTACK THE PROBLEM OF POLICE CORRUPTION. IT TOLD HIM THAT I WAS SURE THAT MY SUCCESSOR WOULD WISH TO FOLLOW UP WITH HIM AS TO SPECIFIC STEPS.

4. COMMENT: I AM AFRAID THAT I MUST TAKE THE STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT WITH A GRAIN OF SALT. MY IMPRESSION IS THAT ONCE HE TURNED THE MATTER OVER TO HIS UNDER SECRETARY LAST YEAR HE DID NOT OCCUPY HIMSELF WITH THE PROBLEM FURTHER. AS FOR GENERAL DURAN, I AM INCLINED TO PUT MORE STOCK IN HIS SINCERITY, BUT I AM SURE THAT
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HE WILL NEED TO BE PRODDed FURTHER. HIS REFERENCE TO "HIS SERVICE" TAKING AN INTEREST IN THE MATTER WAS ENCOURAGING BECAUSE THE ARMY HAS CONSIDERABLE MUSCLE HERE. IT COULD SIGNIFY THAT THE ARMY MIGHT BE CONSIDERING TAKING THE PROBLEM INTO ITS OWN HANDS.
BLOOMFIELD

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